



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **For Immediate Release**

## **Police to be out in force through Memorial Day weekend**

*‘Click It or Ticket’ enforcement mobilization aimed at increasing seat belt use day and night*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 17, 2012) – Motorists who refuse to wear their seat belts – beware. The 2012 national “Click It or Ticket” Memorial Day seat belt enforcement mobilization kicks off May 21 to help save lives by cracking down on those who don’t buckle up.

Despite a wealth of data showing that seat belts save lives – and also despite implementation of a primary seat belt law – Kentucky’s 82 percent seat belt usage rate lags behind the national rate of 84 percent. Therefore, the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) is supporting state and local law enforcement across the country in their efforts to strongly enforce seat belt laws around the clock.

“Kentucky undoubtedly experiences far too many fatalities that could have been avoided with the simple use of a seat belt,” said Transportation Cabinet Secretary Mike Hancock. “Clearly this is an indication that people are not taking the law seriously or they are just not aware of the huge risk taken by not buckling up.”

There were 721 total highway fatalities in Kentucky in 2011 with 576 killed in motor vehicles. Fifty-eight percent of those killed in motor vehicles were not wearing a seat belt.

Hancock said the campaign this year will place extra emphasis on enforcement at nighttime, when fatal motor vehicle crashes are most likely to involve vehicle occupants who were not buckled up. Last year, 67 percent of people killed in crashes between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. were unrestrained.

“Too many motorists don’t realize the importance of wearing a seat belt, and are severely injured or killed because of it,” said KOHS Director Bill Bell. “That’s why officers are prepared to ticket anyone not buckled up. No warnings and no excuses.”

The KOHS awarded more than \$300,000 in federal funds to 64 state and local police agencies across the Commonwealth to help bolster seat belt enforcement during the campaign. The funding is provided through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Although enforcement officers will be prevalent during the campaign, Bell emphasized, “The ‘Click It or Ticket’ campaign is not about writing tickets. It’s about awareness and saving lives, and we are honored to have a family from Kentucky to help spread this message.”

The family of Megan Miller of Owensboro is featured in two KOHS public service announcements airing statewide during the enforcement campaign. Megan was killed at age 17 when she was ejected from a vehicle crash.

“For her not to be wearing her seat belt that one day is all it took,” says brother Myles.

“You just don’t think you will ever lose a child that young,” says mother Mischelle. “We miss her so much, and we wanted to do these commercials in her memory. We know she will make a difference.”

According to NHTSA, seat belts, when worn correctly, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans.

While this year’s “Click It or Ticket” enforcement mobilization runs May 21 through June 3, motorists should know that officers are out enforcing seat belt laws year-round.

“Motorists should buckle up every time they go out, both day and night,” said Bell.

For more on the national *Click It or Ticket* mobilization, please visit [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov). To view the Miller family public service announcements, please visit <http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/>.

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Click [here](#) and [here](#) to view the Miller family public service announcements on YouTube.